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STARTUPS & INNOVATIONS



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VENTURE CAPITAL

Costa Mesa venture firm CerraCap Ventures has invested in Sunnyvale-based diagnostic SaaS Somnoware Healthcare Systems.

CerraCap, which invests in early-stage cyber security, advanced analytics, and health-tech companies, did not disclose its investment amount in Somnoware.

Cap Ventures' founder and CEO Saurabh Ranjan said the firm is bullish about Somnoware's "revenue traction and large iconic client base" as the platform expands.

Somnoware was founded in 2016 and is developing a web-based platform that siloes datasets between over 100 different medical devices, enabling faster patient screening and diagnosis, company officials said.

"Healthcare systems realize now more than ever that workflow automation and access to meaningful data is vital to improving healthcare outcomes and reducing costs," Somnoware founder and CEO Subath Kamalasan said. "This is why we see increasing demand for a platform that enables healthcare systems to integrate systems and devices, consolidate data, and proactively engage with patients to improve care."

The investment from CerraCap Ventures "will accelerate Somnoware's expansion into new markets and boost adoption of our platform by healthcare systems nationwide," Kamalasan added.

Aliso Viejo-based venture capital firm Elevation Ventures is looking to raise \$50 million “to power the next industrial revolution,” Managing Partner Neal Rickner wrote on LinkedIn.

The firm, which was founded in 2020, has partnered with Orange County’s largest incubator, Octane OC, and Irvine’s cleantech incubator Sustain SoCal to help climate tech and sustainability companies “advance through early-stage growth,” the OC native said.

It also brought on climate technology investor Rachel Payne and former Seeder Clean Energy co-founder Alex Shoer.

Elevation Ventures’ check size will range between \$500,000 and \$3 million for seed to Series A-stage companies throughout Southern California.

In 2020, Rickner moved back to OC from the Silicon Valley, where he served as COO of the airborne wind turbine maker Makani Technologies. Google acquired the company in 2013.

According to Rickner, Elevation aims to raise \$20 million of its \$50 million goal by this summer, and to make 15 to 20 investments within the next three years.

Chicago cybersecurity firm Network Perception has raised a \$13 million Series A round, bringing its total funding to about \$15.7 million.

The financing was led by Menlo Park’s The Westly Group and included funds from existing investors Energy Impact Partners of New York, Serra Ventures of Champaign, Ill., Okapi Venture Capital of Laguna Beach and others, officials announced May 3.

When Okapi invested in Network Perception’s \$2.7 million seed round in 2020, Partner Jeff Bocan said the company “is delivering a crucial software solution to help protect the integrity, reliability and safety of our electrical grid from the persistent and emerging threats that put it at risk.”

Launched in 2014, Network Perception develops operating technology and cybersecurity solutions for enterprises. The new funds will help the firm expand its services to new industries and markets and form new partnerships, officials said.

LAUNCH

Xidas Inc., an Irvine-based maker of micro devices, has launched prototypes for its smart, microfluidic in-line sensors that measure blood pressure.

Xidas was founded in 2015 and develops novel, “ultra-miniaturized products” for the life science, industrial and IoT sectors. Xidas’s small volume sensors have near-zero dead volume

and can be used in wearable drug delivery products, portable diagnostics devices, in-line process monitors, miniature catheters, and high throughput biological systems, officials said.

“We are proud of this achievement: a useful, practical, highly integrated microfluidic sensor that can accurately measure the pressure in a single drop of blood,” Xidas’ co-founder and CEO Mark Bachman said in a statement. “This is the first of many upcoming integrated microfluidic innovations from Xidas that will enable leading companies worldwide to miniaturize their fluidic systems.”

Xidas is a portfolio company of Kairos Venture Capital and operates out of a 3,500-square-foot office at 46 Waterworks Way.

Bachman, a former professor at University of California, Irvine, won a Business Journal Innovator of the Year Award in 2019.

“This is a significant milestone for this young company, and provides a glimpse of the disruptive nature of their technology and vision,” Kairos’ CEO Jim Demetriades said.

ACCELERATORS

Irvine diagnostics company Fluxergy Inc., which developed a one-hour COVID-19 test, will be an inaugural member of the Wyss Diagnostics Accelerator’s Industrial Participant Program at Harvard University.

During its time in the program, the 10-year-old company plans to collaborate with distinguished clinicians, researchers, engineers, and other entities on diagnostic solutions in areas of unmet clinical needs, the company said.

“After an initial meeting with the inaugural partners, I’m ecstatic,” Fluxergy co-founder and CEO Tej Patel said in a statement. “We have a room full of scientific and commercial heavy weights that can enact change especially for matching unmet needs with ideal technologies.”

Fluxergy’s goal is to manufacture its multimodal testing system, which is designed to conduct PCR, immunoassays, chemistry, and cell counting all on one, the company said. It can be used in infectious disease, chronic blood disorders, cancer, sepsis, and chronic kidney disease applications.

The company is backed by Kingston Technology co-founder John Tu.

“It’s very unique to be in a consortium of seasoned and passionate people with such diverse backgrounds: applications in human health, veterinary medicine, and food safety, presence in

each of the global markets, and platform technologies that cover telehealth, diagnostics, drug discovery, and digital health,” Patel added.

PRODUCTS

Plant-based meat alternative brand Abbot’s Butcher of Costa Mesa has completed its largest retail expansion to date.

The brand’s vegan chorizo alternative is now available at 1,215 Target locations nationwide, while its entire product line is expanding into more than 150 locations of The Fresh Market and 73 Fresh Thyme grocery stores.

“We are excited to partner with Target, The Fresh Market, and Fresh Thyme to give more people access to our delicious plant-based meats that are crafted with exceptional ingredients, never a trace of additives, natural flavors, soy, or canola,” Abbot’s Butcher’s founder and CEO Kerry Song said in a statement

“Our products are everyday essentials that fit seamlessly into daily routines, so you can enjoy your favorite recipes—made plant-based.”

Song, an animal right’s activist, founded Abbot’s Butcher in 2017. The company makes a variety of vegan meat products like chicken and ground beef. Celebrities Owen Wilson and Woody Harrelson participated in the company’s Series A round last year. The funding amount was undisclosed.

Abbot’s Butcher reported 700% sales growth in the past year and expects to triple that growth in 2022 as a result of the retail expansions.